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## Book Reviews

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**The Bible as English Literature.** By J. H. GARDINER. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906. Pp. xi + 402. \$1.50 net.

Few of those writers who have commented upon the lofty and inimitable style of the English Bible have undertaken to analyze the causes of this style, or to apply to the subject the methods and results of modern criticism. Some of those few, in a laudable attempt to popularize the study of the Bible as literature, have gone too far in the application of modern literary forms to the Old Testament poetry. Professor Gardiner brings to his task an acquaintance with the accepted results of historical criticism and instead of rhapsodizing upon a few selected passages of rhythmical scripture, he investigates the complex sources of that literary charm which it is easier to praise than to understand. Separating the biblical forms into narrative, poetry, wisdom, prophecy, apocalypse, and epistle, he shows how the spirit of simplicity and earnestness animates all, while the Hebrew character, the concreteness of the Semitic vocabulary, and the loose Semitic syntax contribute to the rhythm and the vividness of a translation into any language. Such familiar discriminations as that between the narrative style of J, P, and D, hitherto applied only to the technical processes of criticism, are here made to illuminate the diverse characteristics of Old Testament narrative in English. Likewise, the reflection in English of the literary differences between the earlier and the later prophets is shown to be not only in the denotation of words but in those subtler connotations that even to the unlearned reader separate Amos from Ezekiel.

The latter chapters are devoted to the literary origins and characteristics of the King James Bible. The author belongs to that class of writers who admit the superior scholarship of the revisers but disparage the literary quality of their version; and the whole book is based upon the King James text. No specifications are given to support this familiar charge against the translation now used by all scholars. It would be interesting to see if the author could add to the small list of actual literary blunders in the revision any new examples. However, since he declines to argue the question, any criticism at this point is evidently unwarranted. In tracing the history of the earlier English Versions he gives unusual and deserved prominence to Tindal, but slights Wyclif. While Tindal declared that he "had no man to counterfet, nether was holpe with englysshe of eny that had interpreted the same," any reader may compare for himself in the English Hexapla a chapter or two of the New Testament in Wyclif

and Tindal and decide whether Professor Gardiner is warranted in his sweeping assertion that Wyclif's version, "it is almost certain, contributed nothing to our present English Bible." That Tindal translated from the original, not only in his New Testament but in his Pentateuch, is now well established; but the phrases of Wyclif stuck in his memory, and he could no more avoid echoing them than the revisers could help using his own and Coverdale's rhythms, whether they would or not.

As for the psychological reasons for the mysterious sensuous charm of the biblical rhythms and vocalic harmonies, to which all the greatest English prose writers owe much of their inspiration, Professor Gardiner has many suggestive comments. In some examples he traces out the prose meters and the succession of open vowels and liquid consonants, which the English Bible possesses in larger measure than any other translation except perhaps the Vulgate. More of this analysis would be decidedly worth while. If this essay leads a larger number of students both of literature and of theology to study that grand style of Tindal and his followers instead of trying to patronize it, the effect will be salutary both upon their appreciation of literature and upon their own work in prose composition.

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**The Fourth Gospel: Its Purpose and Theology.** By ERNEST F. SCOTT. ("The Literature of the New Testament.") Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906; New York: imported by Charles Scribner's Sons. Pp. x+379. \$2 net.

Mr. Scott has written a book which no student of the New Testament can afford to neglect. One may not accept its theory of the Fourth Gospel, but he cannot fail to be touched by the remarkable freshness and suggestiveness of the discussion, the sympathetic Christian spirit everywhere manifest, and the winning simplicity of the presentation.

The author assumes "the results of the critical investigation" which usually precedes a treatise on biblical theology. These results, for his book, are "that which is now generally accepted by continental scholars" (p. v). Incidental statements introduced into the book, without which the reader would hardly understand the author's point of view, indicate something of the details of these results: "The gospel is a unity from first to last" (p. 85); that the author was by birth a Jew "is an almost certain inference" (p. 75); yet the gospel is the message of an "unknown disciple" (p. 376), and we face "our ignorance of the authorship of the work and of